Draft at 16 Is Urged for Health

By Drew Pearson

Sargent Shriver, director of the antipoverty campaign, has come up with a revolutionary plan to lower the draft age to 16. The purpose is not to get more recruits in the armed forces but to improve the health of America's youth.

Pearson

It has been found that an increasing number of draftees cannot meet physical requirements. The problem is not one merely for the Army, Navy, and Air Force, but for the Nation as a whole.

Shriver's plan is to lower the draft age in order to examine youngsters at the age of 16, then give them a year in which to improve their physique—under Government guidance. Among other things, he would send them—if they enlisted in a domestic Peace Corps—out to the forests and up into the hills on conservation jobs where they would be under excellent care and working on health-building jobs.

Weekend Warriors

Some of the members of Congress who hold reserve commissions as colonels, brigadier generals, and major generals have been angling for an opinion by Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy that would permit them to serve both in the armed forces and in Congress.

Some of these so-called "weekend warriors" have been put on the spot by a new book, "The Passion of the Hawks," by Tristram Coffin, who pointed out that two of the loudest defenders of the Constitution, Sens. Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.), and Strom Thurmond (D-S.C.), are serving in violation of the Constitution. For the Constitution states: "No person holding any office under the United States shall be a member of either House during his continuance in office."

[A 1930 statute reenacted in 1952 states that membership in the Reserves or serving on active duty as a Reservist is not considered in conflict with the constitutional provisions.]

If Kennedy takes the weekend warriors off the hook with a Department of Justice opinion, he will be going directly counter to the present President of the United States and the late President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

When Lyndon Johnson was a young member of Congress from Texas and also a Lieutenant Commander in the Navy, Mr. Roosevelt wrote an order that a Congressman could not serve both in the armed forces and in Congress.

Sacrosanct Franco

State Department officials do not like to talk about it, but the economic help that Fascist Spain gives to Communist Cuba is the most important coming from any Western country. It consists of the following:

- Regular flights by Iberia Airlines from Madrid to Havana. This is the route taken by the American students who were enticed into Cuba by Castro. The only way they could get there was to fly to Spain, then back to Havana.
- A Spanish shipping line also goes to Cuba.
- Franco is now giving large credits to Castro. This is something no other country grants to any extent, except the Soviet Union.
- Franco has been taking Cuban sugar in exchange for the construction of fishing boats for Castro.

The argument used by the Spanish government is that this link with Cuba is necessary in order to keep up Spanish ties with Latin America.

With most of Latin America, however, Franco has no real ties. On the contrary, his name is a bad word. After President Eisenhower visited Franco in 1959, Latin American Communists circulated propaganda postcards showing a chummy photo of Franco and Hitler together, and on the other side a chummy photo of Gen. Eisenhower and Franco together.

Anti-Franco Factors

The State Department's excuse is military necessity—despite the following factors:

- Last summer when Under Secretary of Defense Roswell L. Gilpatrick flew to Madrid to discuss the renewal of U.S. military bases, he made it clear that these bases were not essential to the United States. They are bomber bases, no missile bases, and the bomber, according to Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, is becoming outmoded by long-range missiles.
- The Navy wants a base at Rota, Spain, for Polaris subs. However, it has already spent considerable money on a Polaris base at Holy Loch, Scotland, in waters nearer the Soviet Union. If a base is needed in the Mediterranean, one in Turkey would be just as good.
- Rep. Jamie Whitten (D-Miss.) once forced an admission from the Department of Agriculture that the cotton we sent Spain free, under the foreign aid program, was then sold by the Spanish government for twice the America price.

However, the Spanish lobby, the most powerful foreign lobby in Washington, has euchered the Johnson Administration into continuing $30 million for Spain while Franco continues thumbing his nose at the United States by helping Castro.

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